



Monthly Meeting Minutes
January 16, 2025
Location: Twisp Town Hall, Zoom

Council Members Present: Lorah Super, David Asia, Hans Smith, Seth Miles (via Zoom), Andy Hover. *Administrator Lane confirmed attendance.*

Council Members Absent: Bill Tackman

Others in Attendance: Sarah Lane, Sandra Strieby (MWC); Wren Soperanez (via Zoom), Murray Taylor, Boo Turner (via Zoom; all, prospective MWC members); Jack Owen (OCD); Susan Crampton (via Zoom). Erin Springer, prospective member, attempted to join via Zoom but was not able to. Ray L. joined the meeting in progress via Zoom.

Audio recording of minutes by: Sarah Lane, Administrator
Digital minute taking by: Sandra Strieby, Project Coordinator

Recording available [here](#).

Common Abbreviations:

- DIP: Detailed Implementation Plan
- ECY: Ecology
- IG: Initiating Government
- LDPP: Local Drought Preparedness Plan (Ecology Grant)
- MWC: Methow Watershed Council
- MWF: Methow Watershed Foundation
- OCD: Okanogan Conservation District
- OCWB: OCD Water Bank

Non-Procedural Motions:

Motion #	Short Title	Yeas	Nays	Abstain
1.16.25-01	Approve 2025 work plan	5	0	0

1. **Meeting called to order:** by Acting Chair Andy Hover at ca. 5:10.
2. **Roll Call and Guest Introductions.** Following the roll call, Jack Owen introduced himself. He is a newly-hired irrigation technician for the OCD, attending to listen, learn, and take notes. He will be helping Jordana Ellis with drought planning and will help with irrigation efficiency; he will be less involved with the OCWB. Boo Turner and Murray Taylor introduced themselves as potential candidates for open positions on the MWC. Susan Crampton attended as an interested citizen. The MWC members discussed absences, noting that Bill Tackman’s attendance has been irregular. The protocol is for the chair to talk with a member who misses three consecutive meetings. Councilmember Tackman attended the September, 2024 meeting and missed the November meeting. The council did not meet in October, so the January, 2025 meeting is the second consecutive meeting missed.
3. **Agenda.** Councilmember Hover moved to approve the January 16, 2025 agenda. Councilmember Smith seconded the motion. Motion approved.
4. **Minutes—review and approval of November 21, 2024, minutes:** Councilmember Smith moved to approve the November 21, 2024 Minutes. Councilmember Super seconded the motion. Motion approved. Councilmember Smith commented that the minutes were excellent.

Item #	Agenda Item
1.16.25-01	<p>Public Comment-(3 minutes/comment) No comments</p>
1.16.25-02	<p>Position 1,2, or 3 Candidates Individuals have applied for positions 2 (at large) and 3 (Middle Methow). Noting that the process of vetting candidates has varied, Councilmember Hover proposed that each applicant submit a letter of interest, including a résumé of what they are doing and where they live, for MWC members to look at, and discuss at the next meeting. Councilmember Asia suggests private interviews. Councilmember Hover proposed adding to the agenda for next month, and blocking out time for interviews and decision making. He does not expect the current applicants to submit additional materials, but would like to ask all of them to come to the February meeting for in-person interviews. Councilmember Hover will not be able to attend on the scheduled date, February 20, and the process cannot be completed without the chair. Following discussion, the MWC members agreed to meet on February 13 instead of on the 20th if the applicants agree. Administrator Lane will email the candidates.</p>
1.16.25-03	<p>Review and Approve: 2025 Work Plan In response to a question, Administrator Lane confirmed that the 2025 work plan includes a spreadsheet and a one-page overview of projected work. MWC members discussed the work of the Policy Committee—to revisit the charter documents as a council, and then make a decision. Councilmember Super suggested doing that at the next meeting. She will present, and expects review and decision-making to be easy if all read the documents in advance. Councilmember Smith nominated Councilmember Miles to serve on the Policy Committee; Councilmember Miles agreed.</p> <p>Following an inquiry from Councilmember Hover about the work of the Water Banking Committee, Councilmember Super said she believes it makes sense to retain the committee as inactive, under the umbrella of the Outreach Committee. Councilmember Hover asked about the relationship between the OCWB and Okanogan County’s bank. Councilmember Super explained the roles and relationship, and said she thinks it makes sense for the MWC to be involved as an advocate and to conduct outreach for improved awareness.</p> <p>Following inquiries from councilmember Hover and Smith, Administrator Lane said that the Outreach Coordinator (OC), when hired, will serve both the MWF and the MWC, and will work on the LDPP project as well as donor outreach planning. Councilmember Smith recommended that the work plan say the MWC will “coordinate with the MWF to hire a part-time OC.” Councilmember Hover agreed.</p> <p>Generally, MWC members said, the worksheet presented by Administrator Lane looks good. They don’t see a need to review the spreadsheet. Ms. Lane said that the next step will be to make one more version, including a tab for each committee and listing its strategies, for quick reference for all MWC members. Outcomes will be important for the grant interview between the MWF and the Methow Valley Fund advisors, expected about the 2nd week of February. Councilmember Smith moved to approve the 2025 work plan; Councilmember Asia seconded. The motion carried unanimously.</p>
1.16.25-04	<p>Committee Confirmation 2025 Administrator Lane explained that the intent is to confirm which committees the MWC will populate. The work plan includes tasks for Technical, Fire Water <i>ad hoc</i>, Outreach and Education, and Policy committees. MWC members discussed the membership needs and work assignments of each committee. Councilmember Hover proposed that the <i>ad hoc</i> Fire Water Committee take precedence. Councilmember Super noted that the Technical Committee has taken over irrigator outreach from the Outreach Committee, is also charged with drought planning, and will need a new chair. Councilmember Hover suggested waiting until after the MWC’s February meeting, when there will be more potential members to populate the committees.</p>
1.16.25-07	<p>Dry Well Fact Sheet Approval The item was stricken from the final agenda as the fact sheet was approved in November, 2024.</p>

Item #	Agenda Item
1.16.25-08	<p>Discussion: For Grants- What is the Value of the Work of the Council, according to the Community Members Interact With?</p> <p>Administrator Lane explained that grant applications often ask about the value of the council’s work. The MWC does a lot of work internally and hosts a few outreach events, but it’s hard to know what the general public thinks. She would like to hear from the MWC members what they know: do people know you’re on the MWC? Do they share with you any information about why what the council does is important? Councilmember Hover said that probably no-one knows of his MWC membership. The Board of Okanogan County Commissioners (BOCC) is discussing water availability and subdivision provisions intensively; stakeholders just know that Mr. Hover is the commissioner, and speak to him in that context. Councilmember Smith said he thinks only Twisp Town Council attendees know. They sometimes hear reports. People don’t talk to Mr. Smith about the MWC. He has talked with people about water issues, and has steered them to the MWC if they have an interest. Councilmember Super said awareness depends on what level an inquiry is coming from. She gets some random solicitations, such as one today about water banking from someone who had been directed to talk with her as an OCD superintendent. There are people who think it’s important. Ms. Super does hear from people who appreciate the outreach the MWC does and the council’s attempts to collaborate with different parties and show what’s going on. She perceives a strong desire for more information and a consistent message. Councilmember Asia referred to the irrigators’ meetings, noting how positive they were. The meetings provided an opportunity for people on different ditches to get together, talk about insurance and things they have in common. Dr. Asia is not sure many of his friends know what the council means or is, although they are glad and impressed that there is such a thing. Most feedback has been from participants in irrigator meetings. Councilmember Hover said he thinks that at some point the MWC will need to change what it is. We have trails and forest health collaboratives. A watershed collaborative with issues to work on—e.g., fire—would be awesome. As a representative of the people, it’s good to sit, have a dialogue about water. There are so many points of view. As the MWC has discussed, changes have brought the relevance of the DIP into question. The MWC is not trying to do a lot of the implementation actions in the DIP. Councilmember Asia said he thinks the current collaboration with the fire district to develop sources of water to fight wildfire is very positive, and a good thing for the community to know about. Councilmembers Hover, Asia, and Super discussed the fire water group’s initial conversation and steps to be taken this year. The work is a collaboration with community members and organizations, including first responders, to look at water-related issues. Administrator Lane said that information could inform the MWF’s responses during an interview with the Methow Valley Fund advisors.</p>

5. Report from the Council Chair. Councilmember Hover reported that water is a low priority on the BOCC’s list. Fentanyl, the jail, and behavioral health are high priorities and will continue to be.
6. MWF Report, Chair – Craig McDonald. Administrator Lane reported that Craig McDonald is stepping down as chair of the MWF effective February 1. Mike Bastian will be chair; Craig McDonald will be acting treasurer until the MWF has additional members. Ms. Lane has been appointed secretary. She has appreciated Councilmembers Asia and Super attending recent MWF meetings as MWC representatives, and hopes that is still possible. The next meeting is scheduled for 2:00 on February 13 at the Winthrop library. The MWF has submitted two grant applications: to the Icicle Fund, for \$10,000, with Project Coordinator Strieby as lead; and to the Community Foundation of North Central Washington’s Methow Valley Fund, for \$9,000, with Administrator Lane as lead. Both are for outreach and general support. Administrator Lane is working on the 2025 budget. The MWF expects to approve it in February. It will be presented to the MWC for review. The budget follows the work plan. Administrator Lane sent corrected financial reports and a new cash-flow prediction tool that the MWF has begun using to the MWC. The MWF has money in the bank. The foundation is working on developing a contract for the new Outreach Coordinator, but will hold off on job announcements until grant awards are announced; funds available will determine the OC’s scope of work. Councilmember Super said she will attend the next MWF meeting.
7. Committee Reports:
 - Outreach and Education Committee, Chair—Lane. Administrator Lane reported that the committee did not meet last month. She is working on the OC’s job description, and has a list of things she would like to see done; funding will dictate the OC’s work plan. One thing that’s critical: grantors ask what the MWC is doing to reach more people. Outreach ideas include (1) programs for schools; (2) invite other groups to participate in MWC meetings and give presentations, then figure out where the organizations intersect on the topic of water. The sessions would provide the context for a conversation and a way

of reach new folks. Ms. Lane has in mind three meetings in the next year, each with a 10-15 minute presentation or conversation, and asked whether that appeals to the MWC members. Councilmember Super said she likes it as a way of showing interest and giving folks a chance to see and talk to the councilmembers. Administrator Lane said the outreach committee will identify attendees. Councilmember Asia suggested developing a presentation for, e.g., the Kiwanis—the reaches, where salmon recovery is underway—general information programming about water in the Methow, what’s being talked of, who is doing the work. Councilmember Hover noted that OCD is the outreach entity for salmon recovery. It might not be bad to reach different people, but the MWC should not reinvent work already being done. Water policies sometimes go beyond public desire to know. Keep it simple; think outreach should be: “what are the problems you see?” Some may be good to work on. Councilmember Super recommended that the council be more solid about what it wants to present. The MWC is transitioning to a different kind of organization; when that has solidified and the council knows its role—the MWC does have a lot of materials to pull from related to the council’s and the watershed’s history and could develop a presentation. Now, would lead to questions not yet answered—which would be good. Councilmember Hover looks at the MWC more as a clearing house. Presenting information when the council has it, e.g., about fire, but also taking in information. A two-way street. Councilmember Super sees listening as a way to inform decisions about the council’s role.

Policy Committee, Chair—Super

Technical Committee, Chair—TBC. Project Coordinator Strieby reported as follows:

- Both towns have agreed to the dry wells fact sheet. Staff plan to publish it next month. It will be posted online; the MWC newsletter will include a link to the fact sheet; and staff will send a news release to the *Methow Valley News*. Staff also plan to produce a printed pamphlet, and Ms. Strieby will talk with the towns about making that available in the town offices. Staff will also look into placing the pamphlets in the visitors’ centers in Twisp and Winthrop, and will have them available at outreach events.
- LDPP—report based on an email from Jordana Ellis, OCD: Jordana has a new colleague, Jack Owen, who will be working with her on water resources and is attending virtually today. The OCD has finalized its contract for the LDPP Grant and soon will organize kick-off meetings with partners. Ms. Ellis also reported on the current drought. Water availability is reportedly at or above normal. December 2024 was one of the warmest on record, and precipitation is above normal. In Eastern Washington, soil moisture is above normal. According to Ms. Ellis’s email, “The state’s drought declaration will remain in place until April when we will see if the system has recovered enough to rescind the declaration. The snowpack would need to be far above normal, not just at or slightly above, to potentially recharge the hydrologic system and be able to say the drought has ended.”
- The tech committee currently has three members, following the resignations of Mike Fort, Bill Tackman, and George Schneider. As George was the chair, the committee needs a chair as well as a boost in membership, which Administrator Lane expects once the open council positions have been filled.

Ad Hoc Committee: Fire Water Connections, Chair—TBC. Project Coordinator Strieby reported as follows: the fire connections working group met in November and agreed that there is potential for the MWC to work productively with FD#6 to develop sources of water for firefighting. Sources could include connections to irrigation lines and ditches, if the irrigation outfits agree; drafting from waterbodies; and drawing from wells. The group proposed to meet again this winter, and Ms. Strieby is working to schedule a meeting with the idea of fleshing out the list of locations identified in November, listing pros and cons of each site, and drafting an initial prioritized list based on feasibility. That will get the group on track to define projects and seek funding later this year. Committee members present identified possible meeting dates as March 12, 13, 14, or 21. MWC members agreed to invite irrigators to the April MWC meeting; Jack Owen will be invited, as well.

8. Local Government Reports:

Town of Winthrop: Councilmember Miles looks forward to seeing the dry-well pamphlets, and would like to see them placed at town hall and the Winthrop visitor information center.

Town of Twisp: Councilmember Smith reported that Twisp has funding from the Public Works Trust Fund to update the town’s water system plan and is interviewing consultants. The town now has an assistant PW director. The last of the town’s water main replacements, on Glover Street, is being planned. It is fully funded with Complete Streets funding. Work will begin in 2026. Ninety percent of the town’s hydrants were replaced recently. Most of the water system’s distribution pipes have been replaced; fire flow is great, and the project will improve that—the town is working to increase pressure. The sewage treatment plant upgrade is underway, and likely to be completed in 2026. It is funded by Ecology for \$13 million. The town has updated its light industrial discharge agreement with OSB—they pretreat, keeping more water available for residential use.

Okanogan County: Councilmember Hover reported meeting with the people who are creating an economic development (ED) plan for the county, under a contract with the Economic Alliance. Water came up repeatedly, with topics including the towns’ ability to provide service outside town limits and issues with funding for infrastructure. Discussion of water in the context of ED indicates a bottleneck to Mr. Hover. The county has updated the water section in its zoning ordinance—it will comply with all laws and court cases. The change codifies what the county has been doing. Councilmember Asia asked whether there is or could be a forum between ED and natural resources, so

the conversation about ED also addresses sensitivity to wildlife, habitat, etc. Councilmember Hover thinks the focus is on revitalization—in particular, addressing competition from online shopping. Significant developments such as a wind farm or server farms would mandate processes that could stymie collaboration. The Economic Development District is trying to work with towns, funding sources, etc. ED focus is on how to bring businesses in, drive sales, etc. Are there ways to encourage and support manufacturing and industry aligned with the local landscape? Discussion followed regarding water availability. Due to litigation, there is a general perception that Okanogan County does not have water. The towns do have water. Points Consulting has raised the idea of a new water bank; Councilmember Super will try to head that off.

9. **Members Report: News from the Community:** Councilmember Super has been invited to participate in a preliminary discussion of a CRM program for water resources with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Trout Unlimited (TU), and the OCD. A TU grant may provide additional opportunities to combine water quantity, quality, and restoration conversations. The geography of the program is not known. Discussion followed. It could be advantageous to all three parties to share resources to advance irrigation efficiency and restoration. Councilmember Super hopes to get more information and provide the participants with background on local needs and what is already in place. She anticipates a discussion about whether to create a CRM program and who would participate. There may be more than one group—Methow and Okanogan. Councilmember Smith said Chelan County’s partnership is focused on riparian restoration strategy enhancement. The tribes are not involved, but supportive. The program is filling a gap and has provided funding for riparian plantings. There could be overlap with the work of the Methow Restoration Council (MRC); ask them to find out. Mr. Smith thinks there are groups that would want to participate, unless the program is Okanogan-centric.
10. **Ecology Report:** None. Councilmembers Hover and Smith favor removing the item from the agenda and calling Ecology if needed. Administrator Lane noted Ecology is short-staffed.
11. **Next Steps**
 - a. **Tasks.** Councilmember Super encourages MWC members to read the policy documents and will prepare a brief presentation for the February meeting.
 - b. **Next Agenda Items.** Discuss policy; interviews; appoint vice-chair—need someone to run meetings when Councilmember Hover is absent. Committee memberships will be decided once the MWC has a full complement of members—probably in March. Names of people asked to join the MWC will be sent to the towns of Twisp and Winthrop and the BOCC.
 - c. **Next Meeting Date**
 - i. The MWC agreed to change the date of the next meeting to February 13, 2025. Administrator Lane thinks Twisp Town Hall will be available, but will confirm the location. MWC members discussed changing the meeting time. Administrator Lane will poll the members.
12. Meeting adjourned at 6:31 p.m.

Commissioner Andy Hover, Acting Chair

February 13, 2025